“It’s our Revolution too”

By Robert Rosa (American Indian Movement, FL / Yukayeke Guainia)

What It Means to Be an Indigenous Caribbean Revolutionary Today

Hatuey spoke pointing at a basket of gold, “Here is the God that Spaniards worship. For these they fight and kill; for these they persecute us and that is why we have to throw them into the sea… They speak to us of an immortal soul and of their eternal rewards and punishments, and yet they rob our belongings, seduce our women, violate our daughters.” Hatuey

This famous quote is as valid today as it was in our ancestors time, as we see the U.S. invasions of Boriken (Puerto Rico),Ayiti (Haiti), AyAy, Utuana (Virgin Islands) and Cuba 1492- current, also with the ongoing neglect,extortion, and inhumane treatment of the people of the Caribbean. This is where Indigenous Caribbean thought enters modern political conversation — not as folklore, but as living political philosophy.

Travelling to Cuba to speak with and learn from our revolutionary relations, on the 53rd “Venceremos Brigade” which included African, Palestinian and Indigenous peoples, was both exciting and saddening. To me it seems they have forgotten what they have learned from their first nations indigenous revolutionaries ,who were experts at guerilla warfare, agriculture and self sustainability or maybe perhaps they still had a certain animosity for them from their historic interactions. I am unsure but I do know that our revolution is theirs as well and I seek here to build that bridge between our peoples and plant a seed, in love, honesty and solidarity.

For centuries, the world has spoken about the Caribbean as if its Indigenous peoples vanished! This includes Taino,Igneri,Guanahatabey,Ciboney,Ciguayo, Macorix and Kilanago people, as well as the different Tribes of Africa that were stolen from their lands.

We are taught that we exist only in museums, in bones, or in the distant past before Columbus.

But we are still here!!!

To be an Indigenous Caribbean revolutionary today begins with a simple but powerful truth:
Our existence itself challenges the colonial narrative and therefore our existence is our resistance.

Also if we still exist, then the story of total erasure was never true.
And if that story was never true, then the political and economic systems built on it must also be questioned.

Colonialism Did Not End — It Changed Form

Many people speak of colonialism as history blaming only the Spainards for their acts of genocide and erasure of our peoples both physically and historically. However I would beg to differ as the Dutch,French, English and in the 1898 U.S.A. were also collaborators /perpetrators in these horrific atrocities as well.

For the Caribbean, colonialism did not end. It evolved.It now appears through:

Foreign ownership of land, industry and ownership

Land in the Caribbean was historically seized through conquest, enclosure, and plantation economies designed to serve European markets. That land was never meaningfully returned to Indigenous or Afro-descendant communities; instead, ownership structures were *legalized* and *internationalized*. In the contemporary era, this continues through: Foreign corporations owning vast tracts of coastal land, such as U.S. military Guantanamo Bay Naval Station, Cuba: The oldest, continuously operating U.S. naval base (since 1903), used for naval operations and detention. Fort Buchanan: Army post serving as a command and reserve center for the region. Muniz Air National Guard Base: Located at Luis Muñoz Marín International Airport, acting as a key air bridge. Roosevelt Roads (Ceiba): Formerly closed, this area is seeing renewed military construction and activity in Boriken (Puerto Rico). Cooperative Security locations (CSLs): These are locations that use existing municipalities such as airports to maintain a military strategic observational post, not a permanent base throughout the Caribbean.

There are mining, energy, agriculture, and infrastructure projects controlled by non-local capital, such as, Canada: Strong presence in mining (Barrick, GoldQuest) and utility services (Fortis).China: Increasing control in mining (JISCO) and massive infrastructure projects

(CHEC).USA: Dominant in oil and gas (ExxonMobil) and renewable energy supply.
Russia: Substantial ownership in Jamaican alumina (RUSAL).

Major pharmaceutical companies from the U.S., Europe, and India
own the majority of pharmaceutical manufacturing in Boriken (Puerto Rico), which acts as a top global hub with over 80 plants. Top owners and operators include Eli Lilly, Amgen, AstraZeneca,Pfizer, Bristol Myers Squibb, Johnson & Johnson, and GSK.

Tourism economies displace local people:

Tourism-driven displacement in the Caribbean stems from high-density, all-inclusive, and luxury development models that prioritize foreign investment over local needs, often forcing residents off valuable,prime coastal lands. This results in rising costs of living, increased gentrification (e.g., Boriken(Puerto Rico),Xaymaca (Jamaica), Cuba, and restricted access to beaches.

Land and Resource Scarcity: Foreign investment in resorts, luxury real estate, and vacation rentals drives up property prices, making them unaffordable for residents.

Economic Disparities: The Borgen Project notes that while 32.2 million tourists visited in 2023, the economic benefits often do not reach local communities, with jobs remaining low-skill and low-wage.

Cultural and Social Displacement: The Students of History report indicates that the commercialization of tourist areas has led to a loss of authentic local experience and culture, particularly in areas like Old San Juan, Boriken (Puerto Rico).

Impact on Local Livelihoods: Coastal infrastructure development harms the environment, impacting traditional fishing and agricultural industries that locals depend on.

Vulnerability: Over-dependence on tourism makes economies vulnerable to crises, as shown by job losses during pandemic-related shutdowns, as well as Hurakan (hurricanes) which impacts priorities (e.g. the people versus tourist locations)

Economic dependence on outside powers: Caribbean economies face significant structural dependency on outside powers, primarily driven by reliance on foreign tourism, imported fossil fuels, and external financial markets. Developed nations control key sectors, dictate trade terms (e.g. the Jones act, Cuba's Blockade) and profit from regional resources, leaving Caribbean countries vulnerable to global economic downturns and high energy costs.

You can also see this in Energy Dependence: Over 90% of the region's primary energy needs are met through imported fossil fuels, leading to high electricity prices and vulnerability to global price fluctuations.Tourism and Foreign Investment: Many Caribbean nations rely heavily on foreign visitors, mainly from North America and Europe, and foreign capital, which can prioritize external interests over local, sustainable development.Limited Economic Diversification: Small market sizes and limited resources force a reliance on a few sectors, such as tourism, agriculture (e.g., bananas, sugar), and financial services, limiting industrial diversification.Trade Vulnerability: Strict trade policies and tariffs from developed nations often disadvantage Caribbean goods in the global market.Brain Drain: The exodus of skilled workers looking for better opportunities abroad weakens local human capital and innovation, further deepening reliance on external expertise.

Cultural systems that treat Indigenous identity as extinct or symbolic: Caribbean cultural systems have long perpetuated a narrative of Indigenous extinction, largely treating Taíno, Kalinago, and other Indigenous identities as historical, symbolic, or mythical, particularly within the Greater Antilles (Cuba, Kiskeya (Dominican Republic), Ayiti (Haiti) Xaymaca (Jamaica), Boriken (Puerto Rico) etc.). This "extinction discourse" was used to justify colonial land acquisition and slavery, transforming living indigenous populations into figures of past, romanticized, or ancestral heritage, rather than contemporary political or social actors.

The "Extinction" Myth: Colonial, and later academic, narratives deemed Caribbean Indigenous populations extinct by the 1550s, overlooking, resisting, and surviving populations that adapted by retreating to remote areas, integrating into rural peasantry, or marrying outside their groups (which was a known practice of indigenous people of the Caribbean known as exogamy today).

Symbolic/Romanticized Identity: Indigenous identity is often reduced to a symbol of "mixture" (mestizaje) or national heritage in countries like the Dominican Republic and Cuba, rather than a distinct, living, and sovereign people. For example one might say " yes we all have a bit of native in us but we are primarily Spanish" giving their indigeneity no more than a symbolic reference of their indigenous ancestors and a stronger

reference to being Spaniard with out a thought or introspection that there maybe a possibility they could be wrong. That is a result of assimilation and indoctrination.

Marginalization of Survival: Although significant, current indigenous movements, such as the Taíno revival in Boriken (Puerto Rico), Kiskeya (Dominican Republic), Xaymaca (jamaica),Ay Ay, Utuana (Virgin islands) or the Kalinago in Dominica, are often met with skepticism or viewed merely as "identitarian" rather than politically recognized, according to Cambridge University Press and assessment.

It has been proven by genetics (e.g.Hannes Schroeder University of Copenhagen genome project and Maria Nieves Colon) that the Taino exists today. Much of the language was absorbed by the Spaniards which many scholars and Taino peoples are working on revitalizing today, such as Cacique Roberto" Mukaro Agueibana"Borrero, Cacique Jorge Estevez and others.

Cultural Memory vs. Official History: Indigenous presence is frequently relegated to "popular memory, family histories, and folklore" or identified only via genetic markers rather than cultural or social continuity. Official History (Colonial/Textual Record) gives a narrative of Extinction: Documents from the 16th century often suggested the Taíno disappeared shortly after contact.Erasure in Records: The Taíno were "removed" from formal written histories and census records, reinforcing the idea of total cultural destruction. This was far from the truth, when the inquisition began in Spain in 1478, any Jew that did not want to be tortured or murdered had only to convert to Catholicism. They became known as *conversos* (converts). This practice was also applied to Taíno Indians after the pleas of Bartolome de la Casas, Antonio De Montesinos, Pedro de Cordoba and more Friars. Then, after 1533, when Indian slaves were "granted" their freedom by the Spanish monarchy, any Spaniard who was reluctant to let their Taíno slaves go would simply re-classify them as African. Paper genocide means that a people can be made to disappear on paper. The 1787 census in Boriken (Puerto Rico) lists 2,300 pure Indians in the population, but on the next census, in 1802, not a single Indian is listed.

Focus on Colonizer Perspective: Historically, Caribbean narratives focused on the Spanish, African, or European experiences rather than indigenous continuity. Historically, Caribbean narratives have been dominated by a "colonizer perspective" that emphasizes European exploration, the establishment of colonial empires (Spanish, British, French, Dutch) using the Papal bulla the Doctrine of Discovery. The Doctrine of Discovery allows European nations to claim non-christian lands be usurped and to subjugate the people of those lands for god and country which is still used in Canadian

and American law, The landmark 1823 Supreme Court case Johnson v. McIntosh (21 U.S. 543) is the primary case that legally established the Doctrine of Discovery in American law. Chief Justice John Marshall ruled that European "discovery" granted absolute title to the land, reducing Indigenous rights to mere “occupancy”.

There was also the plantation economy, often rendering Indigenous populations invisible or framing them as extinct to exploit the indigenous lands and people as no more than a resource not a fellow human or having any rights. This Euro-centric viewpoint has long marginalized the continuity, resilience, and survival of Indigenous communities in the region.

Focus on Colonial/Euro-centric Perspectives:

Narratives of Conquest and Exploitation: Early Caribbean histories and colonial records, such as those from Spanish explorers, focused on the "discovery," navigation, and exploitation of resources mostly gold in that era, frequently portraying Indigenous people as subhuman,heathens or savages with no soul to justify enslavement

The Plantation Narrative: Historical focus heavily favored the Atlantic slave trade, plantation systems, and the experiences of enslaved African labor and European settlers, particularly in the 17th and 18th centuries. Bartolome de la Casas, known as the savior of the Taino, advocated that in his words **“Africans would make better slaves stating that “Africans are hardier than natives”** in 1516 in his letter Memorial de Remedies. However the first slaves came in 1501-1502 to replace those indigenous people that were dying due to mistreatment, disease, and war.

Neglect of Continuity: Indigenous history has been strongly biased toward perpetuating colonialist representations, often skipping from initial contact to "extinction," neglecting the lived experiences of survivors and the oral history of survivors.

Erasure of Indigenous Presence: The "Myth of Extinction" is a narrative that has been historically perpetuated the idea that Taino and other indigenous populations completely disappeared shortly after 1492, ignoring the endurance and ongoing cultural, social, and physical existence of Indigenous people not only in the Caribbean but

throughout the world. This myth has made it very hard for indigenous people and communities to claim not only sacred lands but burial remains, protections and rights.

Erasure as a Tactic: The deliberate exclusion of Indigenous perspectives from the historical record is a long-standing colonial tactic used to justify the dispossession of land, language, spirituality and erasure of local cultures. Alternative Narratives: Recent scholarship and Indigenous activism challenge this, arguing for a recognition of "survivance"—a combination of survival and resistance—against the narratives of erasure.

Impact on Historical Memory: when you have the history written by the victor you'll have found many, if not most, an unreliable source. Foundational texts for Caribbean history were written by European observers (e.g., Columbus, Las Casas) with inherent prejudices, which now require critical, post-colonial re-evaluation. There is now a shift in Regional Perspective: Modern efforts are working to correct this, moving away from colonial-era narratives to focus on Indigenous resilience, the blending of traditions, and the lasting impact of indigenous cultures, as well as the agency of enslaved peoples, rather than just the actions of European powers. While early narratives prioritized the European and African experiences within the context of colonialism, contemporary studies now emphasize the need to uncover the hidden or silenced stories of Indigenous survival and continuity. "Frozen" in Time: Often represented as existing only in the past, or as artistic motifs rather than living descendants.

Indigenous Identity Is Not Symbolic — It Is Political

In short the plantation became a resort. Extraction became investment.Occupation became an influence.So any conversation about socialism, capitalism, or nationalism in the Caribbean must begin here:

> **We are still living within structures shaped by colonial power!**

An Indigenous Caribbean revolutionary does not start with European political labels. We start with the reality of ongoing colonial impact on land, identity, and survival.

In much of the Caribbean, Indigenous identity is treated as heritage but not as a living political presence. We have been engaged in political arenas throughout our time of colonialism, from protecting sacred sights to being fools of empty promises made from colonists to fight in their wars all the way to present, in governmental positions, at the UN and Indian treaty council.

We are remembered in statues, but not always recognized in policy, (e.g. environmental issues, agriculture sustainability, sacred sites and land use)celebrated in festivals, but often absent from political frameworks.

To assert Indigenous Caribbean identity today is therefore a political act.

It challenges; narratives of extinction,national identities built on erasure,economic systems built on dispossession and historical timelines that end our story too early! Indigenous presence forces the Caribbean to confront its full history — not just the parts that are comfortable or widely taught.This is not about exclusion or division.
It is about historical honesty and cultural survival that shows up throughout, not only the Caribbean but the world.

Economic Justice Without Cultural Survival Is Incomplete

Many political movements in the Caribbean focus on economic justice — and rightly so.

Poverty, inequality, and exploitation remain serious realities across the region.
Movements influenced by socialism and anti-imperialism have played important roles in challenging these conditions.

But from an Indigenous Caribbean perspective, economic justice alone is not enough.

A society can provide healthcare, education, employment and still allow Indigenous identity to fade into invisibility.

True liberation must include both:
material dignity and cultural survival!

If a system feeds the people but erases their ancestral identity, it remains incomplete.
If it preserves culture but leaves people economically vulnerable, it also remains incomplete.

The task is not choosing one or the other —
It is building a framework where both exist together.

Socialism, Anti-Imperialism, and Indigenous Reality

Across the Caribbean and Latin America, socialist and anti-imperialist movements have often stood against foreign domination and extreme inequality.

These efforts deserve recognition!
They challenged systems that exploited Caribbean labor and resources for external benefit.

Many Indigenous Caribbean thinkers find natural alignment with certain socialist principles, emphasis on collective welfare, which is seen in Cuba. Key examples include comprehensive social security, rent reduction/protection, community-based child-rearing, and collective farms that provide local food security.

Other examples of collective welfare in Cuba include:universal healthcare. A public, free system that covers all citizens, with a strong focus on community-level preventative care. Education is free and accessible to all, from primary school to university levels. Subsidized food (La libreta): A rationing system provides basic food items and necessities at highly subsidized prices to all households.Social Security and Pensions: Government-sponsored, universal pension systems for retirees and social assistance for vulnerable groups.Employment Protection: The state traditionally guarantees employment, with limitations on working hours (44 hours/week). Collective Farms (Cooperatives): Agricultural cooperatives manage over 50% of land, providing food for national consumption and social benefits for members.Housing Rights: Protection against eviction, with low rent costs and state-supported housing maintenance.Community Support Networks: Communal approaches to childcare, neighbor-to-neighbor assistance for resources, and local committees (CDRs) that foster collective responsibility.

These programs are funded directly by the state to promote "social justice" and ensure a safety net,(although) recent economic reforms have slightly adjusted these models to allow for more private, non-state employment, which still requires adherence to Labor Code protections like minimum wages and maximum hours.

Resistance to imperial control: Indigenous resistance to European imperial control in the Caribbean, including Puerto Rico (Borikén), involved direct warfare, flight, and cultural preservation against Spanish and later U.S. forces. Key examples include the 1511–1518 Taíno uprisings, the creation of maroon communities, maritime raiding by Kalinago peoples, and modern, enduring cultural identity assertions. The Taíno-Spanish War of San Juan-Borikén (1511–1518): Led by caciques like Agüeybaná II and Urayoán, the Taíno people in Puerto Rico launched a major revolt against Spanish encomienda slavery and forced labor, resulting in active fighting until 1518, followed by continued attacks from exile.Flight and Maroon Communities: Taíno people escaped Spanish plantations, fleeing to the interior or to neighboring Kilanago neighbors and Florida. In Cuba and Hispaniola, they formed *ranchos de indios alzados* (maroon camps), with many escaping to islands like Dominica, shattering the notion of total conquest. Kalinago Resistance in the Lesser Antilles: The Kalinago people used maritime technology to resist European incursions, establishing systems of raiding, trading, and capturing European goods and ships, which allowed them to maintain autonomy for over a century.Cultural "Underground" and Persistence: Despite forced labor and cultural repression, Indigenous communities in Puerto Rico (Borikén) maintained identities by going "underground," preserving, or later recovering, traditional knowledge, medicinal practices, and cultural identity. Maroon Alliances: Taíno escapees were among the first *cimarrones* (maroons) in the Caribbean, often collaborating with later African resistance movements against Spanish rule. Modern Persistence: Today, Indigenous identity continues to be asserted in Puerto Rico, resisting narratives of total extinction and challenging modern U.S. colonial structures. These actions show that indigenous populations did not submit quietly, but rather developed complex, flexible, and sustained strategies to combat European and American colonization.

limits on unchecked corporate power: Limits on corporate power in the Caribbean, particularly in Cuba, are heavily dictated by state-centric regulations and, in Cuba's case, stringent U.S. sanctions (Helms-Burton Act) and Blockade that restrict foreign investment and penalize firms dealing with nationalized property. Cuba severely limits

private enterprise, requiring state joint ventures, capping hiring (max 20 workers), and limiting private sectors to 125 specific, state-regulated activities. Examples of Limits on Corporate Power (Cuba & Caribbean): State-Owned Enterprise Control (Cuba): The Cuban government retains control over foreign trade, requiring foreign firms to enter into joint ventures with state-owned enterprises, effectively preventing independent, unchecked corporate operations. Small/Private Sector Restrictions (Cuba): Regulations limit private sector growth by prohibiting franchising, capping restaurant/bar capacity at 50 guests, and making hiring more than 20 workers economically unviable. A list of prohibited activities (125 in 2024) restricts the scope of private action.U.S. Sanctions & Helms-Burton Act (Cuba): The Helms-Burton act of 1996 penalizes foreign companies trafficking in U.S. property nationalized in Cuba by banning their executives from entering the U.S. and enabling lawsuits. This creates a severe legal check on foreign investment. Regulatory Compliance Challenges: Companies engaging in Cuba face, but are sometimes limited by, the need to comply with U.S. anti-bribery and whistleblower laws, acting as an external check on corporate conduct in a non-transparent environment. Local Content/Ownership Requirements: Across the Caribbean, investment agreements often require, or incentivize, local partnership and employment, ensuring that foreign corporations cannot operate entirely independently of local oversight.

These measures function more as state-mandated restrictions rather than corporate social responsibility, aiming to protect national sovereignty or, in Cuba's case, maintain a socialist economic model yet leaves out indigenous input in regards to land, water ways and rights.

Recognition of shared social responsibility: Recognition of shared social responsibility in the Caribbean increasingly aligns with Indigenous principles of stewardship, reciprocity, and collective well-being, focusing on sustainable natural resource management and cultural preservation. This approach integrates traditional knowledge to combat climate change, protect biodiversity, and foster community resilience. Key practices include co-creating projects that honor indigenous land rights,

ensuring community-led conservation, and promoting sustainable, long-term relationships that go beyond compliance.

Key Aspects of Caribbean Shared Responsibility & Indigenous Alignment:

Stewardship and Reciprocity: Indigenous systems emphasize a "Caring for Country" model, where natural resources are managed for the common good, ensuring long-term sustainability. Co-Creation of Value: Sustainability efforts in the Caribbean are moving towards, or being urged to move towards, partnering with local communities to create projects that honor indigenous knowledge systems, strengthening both environmental protection and social equity.

Cultural Identity and Conservation: Recognition includes protecting the spiritual and cultural connection to land, seeing the preservation of resources as crucial to identity. Policy Integration: There is a growing, though sometimes challenging, effort to integrate these indigenous perspectives into national environmental and economic planning, particularly concerning marine ecosystems and sustainable development goals.

Key Challenges & Opportunities:

Power Imbalances: Effective engagement requires addressing imbalances, language barriers, and ensuring indigenous voices are included at all stages of decision-making. Rights Recognition: Strengthening legal recognition of indigenous territories is a key aspect of fostering this shared responsibility.

Marine Focus: Given the context of Caribbean Small Island Developing States (SIDS), aligning with indigenous knowledge is vital for ocean planning and managing coastal ecosystems.

Yet alignment does not mean disappearance.

Indigenous Caribbean identity cannot dissolve into class categories alone.
It cannot become a historical footnote within broader national narratives.

A truly liberatory framework must allow Indigenous identity to exist visibly and autonomously within broader struggles for justice.This is not opposition to socialism. It is a call for any just system to fully include the first peoples of the region within its vision of liberation.

Nationalism: Survival vs Erasure

The word “nationalism” carries many meanings and often raises concern. In the Caribbean context, it must be carefully understood. Some forms of nationalism historically promoted unity by minimizing or absorbing smaller identities. In such cases, Indigenous presence was folded into a single national story and gradually faded from view but there is another form: **decolonial nationalism.**

Decolonial nationalism is not about supremacy or exclusion,

It is about cultural survival: Indigenous cultural survival in the Caribbean, long wrongly deemed extinct, persists through Taíno, Kalinago, and Garifuna descendants in places like Boriken (Puerto Rico), Cuba, Dominica, Ay Ay, Utuana (Virgin islands) and Xaymaca (Jamaica). Survival strategies included isolation, intermarriage, and cultural blending, now affirmed by DNA, oral histories, and a growing resurgence of identity. Key Aspects of Indigenous Survival are active such as **Identity & Resurgence**; Despite colonial narratives of extinction, contemporary Taíno, Kalinago, and Garifuna communities are actively asserting their identities and resisting erasure through many arenas for example: Politically using the census, joining talks in the UN and organizations like International Indian Treaty council. In education changing the narrative of extinction, challenging educators, historians, archaeologists and the public.

Cultural Legacy & Traditions: Indigenous knowledge, including agricultural techniques which always existed, fishing methods, and traditional crafts (such as using cassava and calabash, net making, body paint etc.), continues to influence local life in the Caribbean

Evidence of Continuity: Research and DNA analysis show deep-rooted indigenous ancestry in the region, challenging earlier historical accounts. As more people use at home DNA tests we are finding a surge in people identifying as indigenous. Many people have had these stories of being indigenous their whole life but are weary of claiming indigenous so a rise in DNA test and genealogy has been seen. Then seek out educators to learn their culture which they find not only in family ways, language,spirituality, holistic medicine and food have survived right under their noses showing continuity in all aspects of life, language, culture and spirituality.

Surviving Communities: The Kalinago in Dominica, who live on a protected territory, are a key example of maintaining cultural traditions. Ay Ay, Utuana (Virgin islands) Yukayeke Guainia, Barbacoa Cuba, Mountain regions of Boriken (Puerto Rico), Xaymaca (Jamaica) and Mountain regions of Kiskeya (Dominican Republic)

Maroon Influence: The memory and influence of indigenous ancestors are preserved in Xaymaca (Jamaica) Maroon communities, Loiza Boriken (Puerto Rico), Ay Ay, Utuana (Virgin Islands), Cuba and lesser antilles with the Garifuna Peoples.

Current movements, such as the *¡Taíno Vive!* initiatives, Taino Daka, We Are Still Here, Bomba, African spirituality focuses on recognizing and validating this enduring cultural presence.

Historical recognition: New DNA studies are proving historically what indigenous caribbeans have always known "**WE ARE STILL HERE!"** Recognition by the government of ST. Thomas of the tribe Yukayeke Guainia Casike Maekiaphan Phillips New York (1999): The New York State Assembly officially recognized the Taíno people, as reported in, Connecticut (2025): The state House of Representatives adopted House Resolution 10 (H.R. 10), recognizing the Taíno people's history and contributions, as noted in this article by Connecticut House Democrats. Massachusetts (2025): The state senate commended the Taíno people, acknowledging their heritage. California (2025): Recognized the Taíno people, joining the effort to formally acknowledge their presence, according to a statement on Facebook.

Dignity of a people: In the context of decolonial nationalism, the dignity of indigenous peoples is viewed not just as a human right, but as a core political, cultural, and existential objective aimed at restoring sovereignty, identity, and agency, which were deliberately stripped away by colonial forces by using a **National Identity** (e.g. Jamaican, Puerto Rican, Cuban etc.) as well as a **lingual Identity** (e.g. spanish, french, english etc.)This perspective moves beyond mere independence from colonial rule,

seeking to dismantle ongoing colonial structures—"coloniality"—that continue to dehumanize and marginalize indigenous communities.

Key aspects of restoring and upholding indigenous dignity in decolonial nationalism include:

Reclaiming Sovereignty and Self-Determination: Decolonial nationalism asserts the right of indigenous peoples to self-determination, which includes controlling their own lands, political systems, economic structures, and cultural practices. Which does not take away any aspects of the colonial government but it enhances it and makes it stronger. Honor, Loyalty, Honesty, respect and strength are strong virtues of indigenous culture**.**

Restoring Identity and Culture: A major component is repairing the "internalized shame" caused by colonial stereotypes and restoring a sense of pride in indigenous histories, languages, and traditions.

Reconnecting with the Land: Land is foundational to indigenous dignity, as it is directly tied to community identity and survival. Decolonization involves reclaiming land and, for some, recognizing land itself as having a "nonhuman dignity" (e.g., in Māori, through concepts like mauri, tapu, and mana).

The "Mirror of Dignity": Zapatista thought frames dignity as a "mirror" that reflects equality and triggers rebellion against, and resistance to, the injustices of coloniality.

Challenging Epistemic Violence: Decolonial approaches aim to dismantle "Western" knowledge paradigms that have traditionally dismissed or objectified indigenous histories and knowledge systems. (e.g. the extinction myths throughout indigenous peoples world wide.)

Healing and Reconciliation: Decolonization involves a "process of mourning" and healing, addressing the deep intergenerational trauma, discrimination, and violence stemming from colonial dispossession. This is something that is actual, not something symbolic as was the Vatican's Denouncing the misuse of, not dismantling of, the **Doctrine of Discovery**, which as I spoke of before is engrained in U.S. law and Canadian Law. Ultimately, in this framework, indigenous dignity is realized by replacing colonial, exploitative systems with ones that prioritize community well-being, stewardship of the land, and the affirmation of indigenous humanity.

Self-determination within a shared society: Self-determination within a shared society enables individuals or groups to exercise autonomy, make informed choices, and control their own lives, while participating in a larger, interconnected community. It requires balancing personal/group rights with collective responsibility, fostering inclusion, and ensuring equity, particularly for marginalized, indigenous, or disabled populations. Key Aspects of Self-Determination in Shared Societies:

Individual Empowerment: Involves personal autonomy—making choices about daily life, such as housing, employment, and support services. It is central to disability advocacy, ensuring individuals with disabilities have the same rights as all citizens.

Community Autonomy: Communities (including Indigenous groups) possess the right to define their development paths, manage resources, and make decisions that impact their economic and social well-being, which is common in socialist countries.

Balancing Autonomy with Coexistence: While fostering individual/group agency, it operates within a shared, often legal, framework, requiring a balance between personal freedom and mutual respect within a diverse, shared environment.

Core Principles: The process is supported by four key pillars: freedom, authority, support, and responsibility, aiming to foster inclusivity and equity rather than just

separatism. Indigenous Caribbean identity, when expressed in this way, strengthens rather than weakens the region.

It deepens the historical foundation on which Caribbean societies stand.

A diverse society does not require uniform identity.
It requires mutual recognition and shared commitment to justice.

Toward a New Caribbean Synthesis

The Caribbean stands at a unique crossroads. It carries:Indigenous roots, African diaspora strength, European colonial legacy,
Asian and Middle Eastern migrations, and complex mixed identities
No single imported ideology fully captures this reality.

The future of Caribbean liberation will require a synthesis that includes: economic justice, cultural sovereignty, ecological respect, historical truth and solidarity across all oppressed peoples of the region.
Indigenous Caribbean thought has a place within that synthesis — not as a relic of the past, but as a guide for balance, reciprocity, and survival.

Conclusion: A Living Presence, A Future Voice

To be an Indigenous Caribbean revolutionary today is not simply to adopt an ideology.
It is to insist on a complete vision of liberation.

A vision where: the first peoples of the Caribbean are visible and respected, economic systems serve human dignity rather than exploitation, cultural survival stands alongside social justice, solidarity replaces division and the future is built with full awareness of the past This is my letter to our beloved comrades in Cuba in which its name itself is indigenous, which translates as great land and Cubano translates as people of the great land the Caribbean does not need to choose between identity and progress.
It can build a future that honors both and that future begins by recognizing a truth long denied: “**We are still here!”**

Indigenous communities have more in common with socialism than imperialism and as well have common ancestry with Cuba. **“ IT’S OUR REVOLUTION TOO”**

Comrade Fidel Castro once said in an interview with BBC in June 1961, months after the bay of pigs, he was asked**, “why do you not hold Democratic election basis?”**

His response was **“We asked the people and the people said we don't want politics right now because we are working and politics was good only for robbers and for criminals. The people are working, people aren't worried about that right now. In the future we will solve our institutional problems because now we are building a new society, that is what is most important. We are building the house, after we build the house, we will paint the house and then will organize the house.”**

So I am hoping this helps to organize the house and not only brings Cuba together stronger but also with the whole Caribbean in **unity and solidarity. I say this with much love, honesty and sincerity.**

Thank you “Venceremos” and Cuba you have our hearts and we see you

“CUBA SÍ BLOQUEO NO”